What is claimed is:

1. A method for managing electronic media in which copyright subsides, comprising the steps of:

5   providing a digital representation of a work with digital content and a permissions data set specifying a set of rules concerning authorized use of the work, the rules including a relationship between at least one time measure and a permission or license term,

registering the work on a server, the server being connected for on-line data transfers

10   with at least one computer,

examining the set of rules in response to a request to license the work,

comparing the time measure with a clock time at the receipt of the request and

15   transmitting a set of license terms from the server to the computer in accordance with the relationship between the at least one time measure and the permission or license term; and

transmitting a number of copies of the work to the computer on receipt of a response

20   from the computer indicating acceptance of the terms, the number having the value of at least one.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

25   generating a copyright certificate certifying the number of copies transmitted and at least a part of the permissions data set valid for the copies, and

digitally signing the certificate.

30   3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising storing the digital copyright certificate on the server.

4. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of generating a

hyperlink reference to an on-line accessible version of the copyright certificate and transmitting the hyperlink reference to the computer.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the digital copyright certificate is signed
5   with a private key of a person who is not the owner of the copyright.

6. A system for managing electronic media in which copyright subsides, comprising:

a server connected for on-line data transfer with at least one computer, the server
10   having:

means for accessing a permissions data set specifying a set of rules concerning authorized use of a digital representation of a work with digital content, the rules including a relationship between at least one time measure and a permission or license
15   term,

means for examining the set of rules in response to a request to license the work,

means for comparing the time measure with a clock time at the receipt of the request
20   and for transmitting a set of license terms from the server to the computer in accordance with the relationship between the at least one time measure and the permission or license term; and

means for transmitting a number of copies of the work to the computer on receipt of a
25   response from the computer accepting the terms, the value of the number being at least one.

7. The system according to claim 6, further comprising:

30   means for generating a copyright certificate certifying the number of copies transmitted and at least a part of the permissions data set valid for the copies, and

means for digitally signing the certificate.

8. The system according to claim 7, further comprising means for storing the digital copyright certificate on the server.

5   9. The system according to claim 7, further comprising means for generating a hyperlink reference to an on-line accessible version of the digital copyright certificate and transmitting the hyperlink reference to the computer.

10. The system according to claim 6, further comprising means for determining the
10   clock time from at least two reference clocks.

11. A method for managing electronic media in which copyright subsides, comprising the steps of:

15   providing a digital representation of a work with digital content and a permissions data set specifying a set of rules concerning authorized use of the work,

receiving the work and the permissions data set at a certification server operated by a third party and storing the work electronically,
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generating from the work and the permissions data set a digital publishing certificate signed with a digital signature of the third party, and

storing the publishing certificate electronically.
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12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the digital publishing certificate includes a time stamp, the time stamp being determined from a clock time.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the clock time is determined by
30   reference to at least two reference clocks.

14. The method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of transmitting the digital publishing certificate to the computer.

15. The method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of transmitting a hyperlink reference to the computer, the hyperlink reference directing a browser to a location where the work is stored.

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16. A system for managing electronic media in which copyright subsides, comprising:

means for providing a digital representation of a work with digital content and a permissions data set specifying a set of rules concerning authorized use of the work,

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means for receiving the work and the permissions data set at a certification server operated by a third party,

means for storing the work electronically,

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means generating from the work and the permissions data set a digital publishing certificate signed with a digital signature of the third party, and

means for storing the publishing certificate electronically.

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17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the means generating the publishing certificate generates the certificate from the permissions data set, a time stamp and the work, and further comprising a clock means for determining the time stamp.

25   18. The system according to claim 17, wherein the clock means includes means for determining time by reference to at least two reference clocks.

19. The system according to claim 16, further comprising means for transmitting the digital publishing certificate to the computer.

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20. The system according to claim 16, further comprising means for transmitting a hyperlink reference to the computer, the hyperlink reference directing a browser to a location where the work is stored.